Advance Africa Project
Best Practices Update: Best Practices in Adolescent Reproductive Health

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October 2003

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Best Practices Update

Reproductive Health • Family Planning • HIV/AIDS

OCTOBER 2003

BEST PRACTICES IN ADOLESCENT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

As adolescent reproductive health programs become more prevalent, implementing best practices will help to reduce duplication and improve overall service delivery. Listed below are highlighted best practices for three types of programs: school-based programs, mass media programs, and community-based programs.

BEST PRACTICES HIGHLIGHTS

I. SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS
Key best practices identified in these types of programs:
- ❖ **Building on existing services and social structures**
- ❖ **Adaptation of existing educational curricula**
- ❖ **Use of existing institutions to implement adolescent programs**
- ❖ **Participation of school administrators and parents**
- ❖ **Utilization of drama for delivering messages**

Case Study: In Ibadan, Nigeria, a six-week multimedia course presented during the school day resulted in statistically significant increases in knowledge and attitude toward HIV/AIDS in a quasi-experimental study. HIV prevention behaviors were improved after 6 months, including a decreased number of sexual partners and consistent use of condoms. Educational sessions were comprised of a variety of techniques, including lectures, films, role plays, debates, stories, songs, and essays. A demonstration on the proper use of condoms was presented after receiving approval from the school principal.
Key success factors: Support and involvement of school principal and teachers.

II. MASS MEDIA PROGRAMS
Key best practices identified in these types of programs:
- ❖ **Use of popular youth culture**
- ❖ **Creating links to medical schools, utilizing local institutions**
- ❖ **Use of branding/logos**
- ❖ **Edutainment/drama & music**

Case Study: "Tsa Banana" used successful adolescent social marketing practices to promote youth-focused reproductive health centers and increase awareness of and access to information on HIV/AIDS, teen pregnancy, and STIs in Botswana. Most of the components and strategies of "Tsa Banana" have continued in Botswana, and have been replicated in Zambia, Malawi, and Namibia.
Key success factors: The contribution of youth to the project at a variety of different levels, from design of information, education, and communication campaigns to the overall management of project activities, ensured youth-focused messages were used.

III. COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS
Key best practices identified in these types of programs:
- ❖ **Use of youth to educate community as a whole**
- ❖ **Multi-intervention approach to address comprehensive ARH needs**
- ❖ **Use of existing services and social structures**
- ❖ **Peer education and promotion**

Case Study: Youth trained in the Dominican Republic as peer educators distributed reproductive health materials in their neighborhoods. Each peer educator was expected to work in-depth with ten youth in his or her community and to give presentations to larger youth audiences. Some have performed with a drama group to communicate messages on sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention, and contraceptive methods, while others have served as guest speakers on popular radio and television shows. Peer educators receive three or four in-service refresher trainings each year. Evidence of behavior change showed HIV prevention behaviors improved after six months, including a decreased number of sexual partners and consistent use of condoms.
Key success factors: Involvement of local social networks and use of edutainment. Peer educators indicated that they were proud of their association with the organization.

RESOURCES

The following key sources have been used to gather these adolescent reproductive health practices:

- FOCUS, *Advancing Young Adult Reproductive Health: Actions for the Next Decade*. End of Program Report, 2001.
- Newton, Nancy. *Lessons Learned From SEATS Experience*. January 2000.
- UNAIDS Best Practice Collection, Issue 2, 2000.
- Meekers D, et al. *Changing adolescents' beliefs about protective sexual behavior: The Botswana Tsa Banana Program*. PSI Research Division, Working Paper no. 3, 1997.
- IPPF Spotlight on Youth. "Working in Communities: Youth Peer Education in the Dominican Republic." http://www.ippfwhr.org/publications/download/serial_issues/spotyouth2.pdf

ABOUT THE BEST PRACTICES COMPENDIUM

For managers looking to implement successful programs, easy access to credible information regarding proven, effective, evidence-based practices and programs is essential. To address this need, Advance Africa has documented evidence-based practices in a concise format and compiled them into the **Best Practices Compendium**.

The **Best Practices Compendium** attempts to include many of the best and promising practices from experiences with reproductive health programs. However, as a continually updated resource, the Compendium is not an exhaustive compilation. We encourage active submissions from all program managers to share global and local best practices and lessons learned in order to further build upon this valuable resource.

What are the Best Practices Updates?
The **Best Practices Updates** are quarterly summaries of evidence-based best practices. Each BP Update focuses on a specific topic within reproductive health. Topics are linked to key focus areas within Advance Africa's workplan.

What is a "best practice?"
To be considered a **best practice**, substantial evidence must be provided to show that a given practice has had a positive impact and/or has successfully met its program objectives. A best practice must also be replicable and transferable to other settings. If a practice/program is lacking evidence of success and/or does not show evidence of being transferable or replicable, it is designated as a **promising practice.**

The external Review Board reviews and designates all submissions as best practices and promising practices included in the Compendium. In identifying best practices, a clear distinction is made between untested interventions and those backed by more experience and evidence.

Knowledge Sharing: A Primary Objective
Advance Africa welcomes knowledge sharing throughout the Best Practices community, including USAID cooperating agency partners, the Best Practices Advisory Group, and the external Review Board. Individuals and organizations are encouraged to share their practices or comment on experiences with any of the practices in the Best Practices Compendium.

Using the Searchable Compendium:
- **Visit** www.advanceafrica.org/bestpractices.
- **Search** by key word, country/region, technical area, or target population.
- **Prioritize** your search for "best practices" or "promising practices."
- **Join** the Best Practices community.
- **Submit** your own best practice!
- **Request** the Compendium on CD-ROM.